

Remarks

Initially, Applicant would like to express his appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided on March 19, 2004 and the acknowledgement of Applicant's Information Disclosure Statements by return of the Form PTO-1449. Applicant also acknowledges with appreciation the acknowledgement of Applicant's Claim of Priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document.

Applicant also notes with appreciation that claims 2-4, 8 and 11-13 have been indicated by the examiner to contain allowable subject matter.

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1, 3, 10 and 12 will have been amended, and claims 2 and 11 will have been cancelled. Thus, claims 1, 3 -10, 12, and 13 are currently pending.

On pages 2 and 3 of the Official Action, Claims 1, 5, 6, 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sugiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,107,147), and on page 4, claims 1, 7, 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Oka (U.S. Patent No. 5,464,351).

By the present amendment, independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claims 2 and 11, respectively, and claims 3 and 12 have been amended to depend from allowable claims 1 and 11. With this

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amendment, Applicant is not acquiescing to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, but has merely incorporated to respective allowable dependent claims into claims 1 and 10 to achieve an early allowance of the present application.

COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

In this regard, while Applicants do not disagree with the Examiner's indication that certain features of claim 2 are not found in the prior art, Applicant further wishes to make clear that the claims in the present application recite a combination of features, and that patentability of these claims is also based on the totality of the features recited therein, which define over the prior art.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Entry and consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action, and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate. Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believes that he has now done so.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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